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SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR G/TIP JANE SIGMON, USAID RUTH POJMAN, GLENN ROJERS
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SUBJECT: TURKEY: FUNDING REQUESTED FOR ANTI-TIP INITIATIVES

¶1. (SBU) Post requests Department and USAID consider funding anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) initiatives in Turkey to support Turkey's efforts to qualify as a Tier I TIP country (see paras. 3 - 6). U.S. resources and/or expertise in the areas cited in the 2007 TIP Report can improve Turkey's anti-TIP capacity and make a big contribution to its anti-TIP performance. Specifically, Turkey needs to improve victim identification procedures and better collect and consolidate trafficking data. According to the report, it should also investigate, prosecute, convict and sentence government officials complicit in trafficking. Finally, the GOT should ensure judicial officials receive victim identification and sensitivity training.

¶2. (SBU) Investing in People -- Health and Education is a foreign assistance priority for U.S. Mission Turkey. Our FY 2009 Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) requested \$9 million in ESF funding to join NGO and international organization programs on women's health, education and trafficking in persons. Improving Turkey's TIP ranking is also an MSP performance indicator. Our 2007 target is to achieve effective implementation of trafficking laws resulting in increased convictions and incarcerations of traffickers, and for Turkey to qualify for Tier I in the Department's annual TIP report.

PROJECT PROPOSALS

¶3. (SBU) We request USG funding for the International Organization for Migration's (IOM -- the major implementing partner for anti-TIP programs in Turkey) project proposal for legal services to TIP victims (see para. 8). Under Turkish administrative policy, all trafficking victims -- actual or assumed -- are guaranteed free legal services, provided by the relevant local bar association. IOM's proposal aims to train new lawyers -- particularly women -- and develop a core group of experts on providing services to TIP victims. These services include visa and immigration services, and the guidance to victims necessary if they are to cooperate with judicial authorities on prosecutions. The project would have a positive impact on prosecutions and victim sensitivity. IOM is also submitting the proposal to the Netherlands Government for possible funding. The focus of the project is Ankara. The USG could partner with the Netherlands or, perhaps in concert with another donor, expand the program to other TIP hotspots, such as Istanbul, Trabzon and/or Antalya. Preliminary discussions with MOJ and with non-governmental TIP experts indicate that both government and NGOs believe Turkey's anti-trafficking efforts would benefit from TIP-specific training for core groups of legal service providers.

¶4. (SBU) In addition to the above proposal, we suggest the USG fund or support a number of other anti-TIP projects.

Among these are training on victim identification and data collection by U.S. or international experts. The GOT has demonstrated some interagency weakness in its ability to track TIP cases from arrest through prosecution, conviction and sentencing. Supporting an effort such as this would also directly support post,s ability to accurately report on GOT anti-TIP efforts.

15. (SBU) USG funding could also make a direct and meaningful impact on the lives of victims by funding operations of Turkey,s two existing, dedicated anti-TIP shelters, based in Ankara and Istanbul, or, funding the start-up of a third shelter in another trafficking hot spot. The shelters are critical to the implementation of Turkey,s anti-TIP action plan. Human Resources Development Fund runs the Istanbul shelter, and the Woman's Solidarity Fund operates the Ankara shelter, with some GOT support. An MOU with the municipality created the Istanbul shelter, whereby the city provides free rent. Secretary Powell and FM Gul attended the signing ceremony. USG funds could be directed toward specific shelter operations, such as psychological or legal services. A dedication of USG funds could and should stimulate matching resources from the GOT, further expanding shelter capacity.

16. (SBU) USG directly supported last year's GOT-sponsored and IOM-prepared public awareness campaign, "Have you Seen My Mother," which successfully eroded some of the stigma of prostitution attached to trafficking victims by appealing to Turks' strong sense of family. Turkey is a conservative country, and this stigma discourages NGOs and private industry, as well as local government, from focusing on the provision of trafficking victim assistance. We should consider funding another such campaign to maintain the positive momentum.

17. (U) Although Turkey is a Tier II TIP country, and its performance is improving, much remains to be done. An investment now will pay substantial dividends. Targeted U.S. assistance can raise Turkey,s capacity, improving the lives of victims, while helping to move Turkey to the level of a Tier I country -- one that meets the minimum standards for the elimination of TIP.

IOM PROJECT SUMMARY: Combating TIP Through Legal Assistance and Judicial Cooperation (full proposal to be sent separately, by email)

18. (U) BEGIN TEXT. The project proposal will fund comprehensive capacity building in the field of legal assistance for trafficked persons in Turkey as well as selected countries of the Black Sea region. This will be carried out through:

- Awareness-raising on human trafficking for the legal community through organized workshops and panels within the Internship Attorney Program by including the revised Turkish Penal Code and the Code of Penal Procedures for newly examined attorneys in Ankara;
- Establishing and training a core-group of legal experts on counter-trafficking, to provide legal assistance to trafficked persons;
- Cooperation and the promotion of mutual legal assistance within the Black Sea Bar Associations in cooperation with the Turkish Bar Association;

The main aim of the project proposal is to increase the prosecution of traffickers in Turkey and in the region. The project will also ensure that the human rights of trafficked persons are respected and that they have full access to justice. END TEXT.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON